

LETTER To Dr. E. S.

CONCERNING

His late Letter to Mr. G. and the Account he gives in it of a Conference between Mr. G. and himself.

From one who was present at the Conference.

publish'd with Allowance.



L O N D O N ,

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A

LETTER

To Dr. E. S.

Concerning his late Letter to Mr. G— and
the Account he gives in it of a Conference
between Mr. G— and himself.

SIR,

MR. G— being now at a very great distance from his Place, and it being great pity that his Reputation should suffer so long (as it must needs be till you can receive an Answer to your Letter from himself), I think it will neither misbecome a Christian, nor a Friend, if (having been a Witness to the Conference you mention, and Conversed with Mr. G— both before and after it) I overcome the natural Repugnance I have of appearing in this manner, and offer some Things to your Consideration, which (I ought to hope) will much conduce towards the restoring him, both to your good Opinion, and to that of the World, who being Strangers to the Matter of Fact, (I am confident) think worse of it than you your self do; tho' your Complaint seem to be so much in earnest.

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Where-

Wherefore I take the liberty of laying what I have to say, before you, as faithfully as a most sincere desire of speaking nothing but Truth, and as fully as my Memory shall enable me.

First then, before the Conference Mr. G-- acquainted me, that having affirm'd in some Company, That no *Protestants* could shew any Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith, one Mr. T-- had promis'd him, That if you were not able to manifest the contrary, he would forsake your Communion; and that hereupon he had undertaken to Discourse with you on this Subject: I mention this, that my Readers may know how the Conference was occasion'd, and what was design'd for the Matter of it, that they may be the better Judges of what follow'd.

The Hour of Conference being come, before any Arguments pass'd, Mr. G-- desir'd, that what was said on both Sides might be written down, for the prevention of such Mistakes as might otherwise arise, and are very usual in Things of this nature. This Proceeding was no Mark of one who wanted an Intention of dealing fairly, nor part of that *great care*, which, you say, *he took to keep you from expelling any great Ingenuity from him*; since nothing could favour of greater Candor, or more Ingenuity, than a Desire of putting it out of his power to represent that which pass'd, any otherwise than in truth it was, which he manifestly shew'd by proposing, that it might be committed to Writing. Wherefore, if you had spar'd this Reflection, I am apt to think, that you would have given a better Proof of that Ingenuity in your self, which you seem to look on as wanting in him.

Mr. G--

Mr. G-- having desir'd this, three Persons sat down to Write: The Gentleman whom you Employ'd was one, Mr. T-- (the Protestant whom you Confirm'd) a Second, and Mr. G-- Friend the Third.

The First Thing which was Propos'd, and indeed the only Subject, which (as I have already intimated) Mr. G-- had any purpose to Discourse on, was *Whether Protestants had a Ground of Absolute Certainty for their Faith, or not.*

During this Dispute (which, I think, lasted about two Hours) tho' it was not carry'd on without some Wrangling, yet at length the Questions and Answers were Penn'd down with Quietness enough. They were also constantly Read aloud after they were Written, so that all the Writers had an opportunity of rectifying what should happen to be amiss in their respective Copies. This Exactness continu'd during the Agitation of this First and Chief Question. But this Dispute being broken off (after what manner, I shall tell you presently) when the People grew weary, and (as it seldom fails on such Occasions) somewhat more Pervish, a new Controversie was started, which lasted but a little while, and being manag'd with more Noise, and greater Interruptions (especially towards the end) than the former, it might have been apprehended, that the Writers would not be able to observe the same Accurateness which they had done before, and that thence might follow some little Disagreement between the Copies. In a word, The Discourse growing hot, and Passion and Personal Reflections beginning to take the place of Arguments, or, at least, to mix with them, the Company rose up, and Mr. T-- being willing to preserve the Peace, and considering

(as)

Was I suppose) that it was late, declar'd that he was abundantly satisfy'd with your Reasons, and therefore signifi'd his Desire, that Mr. G— might not trouble you any farther; whereupon he was forc'd to put an end to his Argumentation, by Taking his leave. And here, I confess, there were some Things said by both Sides, which were not written down; and it is not improbable, but that somewhat might be taken by one Writer, which was not by another. The Parting also was so abrupt and hasty, that no one thought of, or at least, mention'd the Comparing or Signing the Papers, but each Writer, without any farther Ceremony, carry'd away his own Copy.

Some Readers imagine by what you speak of an *Original Copy, read aloud, and approved by both Parties,* that such a Copy of the whole was Read at the end of the Conference, and so approved, which was not so; but the Questions and Answers were for the most part still read as they were set down, in the manner I have here described.

This is in General what I remember of the Conference, of which I shall have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter.

After the Conference Mr. G— desired the Gentleman, who wrote for him, to let him have the Copy he had taken: And proceeding *bona fide*, and knowing no Cause, why this Gentleman should put a corrupt Copy into his hands, & also finding what he received to agree in Substance with what he himself remembered of the Dispute, he had no reason to look on it any otherwise, than as sufficiently exact, at least, so much of it, as concerned the first and principal Controversie, which

(as

(as I have said before) was more cautiously taken notice of.

Now, whereas you say, That Mr. G... made great *boasts* of a Victory after the Conference, he was so far from it, that being then asked by some of his friends, what had been the issue of that encounter, he answered that your Art was such, that he had not been able to bring his Disputation to any Conclusion: Which, in my Opinion, is rather a Commendation of your Skill, than a boast of his own Victory. He added indeed, that if their Curiosity led them to know, how far and in what manner the Master was carried, he could shew them the Questions and Answers that were written down on both sides: Leaving them to pick out, what they could, from such lame and unfinished Discourse. And I wonder, that you your self should suppose, that he aimed at the Glory of a Conqueror by those Papers, since you cannot, but see, that according to the Tenor of them the Victory lies on neither Side. I fix this on presumption, that those Papers which came to your hands, were true Copies of that which was given out by Mr. G.... But because it may be otherwise, and that a great part of your Suspicion on this Occasion may be raised by a mistake, I shall here subjoin a true Copy of Mr. G... Paper. And that you may examine the Title of it with more Convenience, a Copy likewise of your own (which I had from a Protestant Gentleman of great worth and integrity) shall be set down by it in a Parallel Column. That on a due Comparison, and maner thoughts, you may judge, whether Mr. G... in truth deserve so black a Note of insincerity, as you are pleased to lay.

lay upon him, or on the other side, you be obliged to make some amends for an ungentile and unchristian Insinuation.

Mr. G---s Copy. Dr. St---'s Copy.

1 Qu. **VV** Hether you are absolutely Certain that you hold now the same Tenets in Faith and all, that our Saviour taught to his Apostles?

1 Answ. We are absolutely certain that we now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.

2 Qu. By what certain Rule do you hold it?

2 Answ. By the Divine Revelations contained in the writings of the New Testament?

3 Qu. By what certain Rule do you know that the New Testament we now have, does contain all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles?

3 Answ. By the Mai-

1 Qu. **VV** Hether you are absolutely certain that you hold now the same Tenets in Faith and all, that our Saviour taught to his Apostles?

1 Answ. We are absolutely certain that we now hold all the same Doctrin that was taught by Christ and his Apostles.

2 Qu. By what certain Rule do you hold it?

2 Answ. By the Divine Revelations contained in the writings of the New Testament.

3 Qu. By what certain Rule do you know that the New Testament which we now have, does contain all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles?

3 Answ. By the Universial

versal Testimony of the Christian Church from the Apostles time down-
ward.

4. Q. What shall Over-
versal Testimony and Infallible Rule suffice us to cer-
tainly determine any thing
than the New Testament
contained all the Divine
Revelations of Christ and
his Apostles? And can it
be any thing else? The Univers-
al Testimony of the Chris-
tian Church concerning
the Book of Scripture and
the Doctrine contained
therein, is a sufficient
ground to make us certain
of all matters that are
necessary for our Salva-
tion.

5. Q. Being the word
Christian Church may
be taken in several Lati-
tudes by persons of differ-
ent Religions. I desire
to know how you define the
Christian Church? Or, what
is the Testimo-
ny concerning
the Book of Scripture
absolutely certain of all
matters that are necessary
to our Salvation?

versal Testimony of the Christian Church from the Apostles time down-
ward.

5. Q. Was that Uni-
versal Testimony and In-
fallible Rule to suffice us
certainly down to our
time, that the New Te-
stament contained all the
Divine Revelations of
Christ and his Apostles?

6. A. The Univers-
al Testimony of the Chris-
tian Church concerning
the Book of Scripture and the Doctrine
contained therein, is a
sufficient ground to
make us certain of all
matters that are necessa-
ry to our Salvation.

5. Q. Being the words
Christian Church may
be taken in several Lati-
tudes by persons of differ-
ent Religions, I desire
to know what that Chris-
tian Church is, whose
Testimony concerning
the Book of Scripture
and the Doctrine con-
cerning all matters that are
necessary to our Salvation?

old to mankind. Is not
Christianity the most
probable religion?

3 Answ. By the Uni-
versal Testimony of the
Christian Church con-
cerning the Books of Scripture
which are our Rule of
Faith, or Instruments of our
Salvation. I mean in the
Universal Testimony of all
Christian Churches from
the first down to this day.

4 Testimony of the
Christian Church con-
cerning the scope of their
Scriptures. That they have
been written for the conser-
vation of the Christian
religion, to direct us to
the knowledge of God, &
to show his works; and
of your own particular
religion, in order
to make you acquainted

certain of all matters
that are necessary to our
Salvation.

5 Answ. By the Uni-
versal Testimony of the
Christian Church con-
cerning the Books of
Scripture which are our
Rule of Faith, as to mat-
ters of Salvation. I mean
the Universal consent of
all Christian Churches
from the Apostles time
downwards, touching the
scriptures of the Christian
Church. Here, Mr. T. ——, the
Person for whom the Con-
ference was, being well satis-
fied in the Doctor's an-
swers, desired to ask
Mr. G. —— some Ques-
tions, saying, he was con-
firmed in the Truth of his
own Church, and therefore
demanded how he proved
them.

You have here the whole and entire Writing of
the first, longest and most Methodical Controversie,
as well according to Mr. G.—'s Edition as your own,
wherein the difference is so trivial, that I dare appeal
even to your own subtlety (who are as apt to find
a Knot in a Bulrush as another) whether or no, you
have here any cause for complaint. And his exac-
tess.

not in this Copy, ought to have been an Argument with you, that such Errors as you found in them, were rather to be attributed to the Confusion wherein that second Dispute ended, or some other Accident, than to any wilful Inattention; unless perhaps you imagined, that the Blue of the first Dispute was such, as that Mr. G... could have no opportunity for any Forgery in the account of it, which is not greatly for your Credit, since this Dispute (as I have said) was that, for which the Conference was designed, and that wherein the whole thing (in a manner) was taken up and bring carried on so far as you were pleased to give it leave, now in another edition of T... book at v...

At the end of that Copy of your Paper, which I received from the abovementioned Protestant Gentleman, I found these words: "Here Mr. T. the person for whom the Conference was intended, says that in the Dispute before you, &c." And therefore I have likewise added them in this Transcript, lest I also might pass with you for a Dispenser of impured Copies, tho' I think the Gentleman told me, that those words were only his own Memory, and not what you imputed to him by word of Mouth concerning that Dispute. And this too I say, lest on the other hand you should arraign me for any Addition. So Perpetually except it be he who's a man to be reckoned for the punishment of his sins) he falls into those circumstances, where not only the least inadvertence is improved into a crime, but even (when nothing else will serve the turn) the clearest innocence is render'd guilty.

And now to show the World, how willing I am to do you all the right imaginable, I must freely acknowledge,

acknowledge, that Mr. T— at the end of your last Answer in this Dispute (as he had done a question or two before), declared, (according to what is set down in the above-mentioned Memorandum) that he was fully satisfied with your Answers:— Neither did Mr. G— ever pretend the contrary. But then I hope, in return you will give us, and others leaving to judge, (who give every man his own judgment in these Disputes, according to consequence and difficulty,) how far the satisfaction of Mr. T— was rational; and what grounds he had for it. I am sure, that several ingenious Protestant Gentlemen having perused this Paper, said, That Mr. T— was very easily satisfied. To conclude, your Answers lie before the Reader, and he may judge of them himself. I beseech you, good and most beloved, I say, But since you are so careful that people should understand, what was spoken by Mr. T— at the end of this first Dispute, it is but just, that you should give me leave to let them know, what was likewise spoken by Mr. G— who it is he, not written down in these Copies. You may remember, that when Mr. G— put his first Question to you, viz. Rom. xi. 25, Relying on my knowledge of the New Testament, without any scruple, I told him, that the Divine Prophecy of Christ was his Apostle's. And you Answered, Right. Distrusting the Professors of the Christian Church, from their professed dependence Mr. G— would, though she knew not what I did, tell the Apostle, that he who you would declare how far downward you meant it, whether down to our times or not, you told him. I had your Answer, was already prepared, that he might make the best of it. Now, as you will, in your Answer, tell that Mr.

Mr. G- took care in the Conference to keep you from carrying any great Ingenuity from him; so, if I am not mistaken, this odd Behaviour gave him also a sufficient Warning of what he was to expect from you, not being a Proceeding which look'd more like a Search after Victory or Evasion than Truth. But to go on; Your refusal of so reasonable a Desire, instead of confounding Mr. G-, or putting him out of the Road, (as, perhaps, you thought) it might have done, oblig'd him to the following Question, and this Question drew from you that Answ're which you had refus'd before. Here it was that Mr. T- declar'd somewhat more earnestly, how fully he was satisfied with your Answ'rs, saying somwhat to this purposing by way of a Recapitulation. That Mr. G- had Asked, How the Protestants knew certainly, that they held the same Faith that was Taught by Christ and his Apostles? It was Answ'red, By the Scripture, And being Asked, Upon what certain knowledge they had the right Scripture? It was Answ'red, By the Testimony of the Christian Church. Which he looked on as a most ample Satisfaction, and therefore presid'd that the Controversie might end, and you were so far off his Mind, that I remember you urg'd it to be most reasonable that he, for whose sake the Conference was desir'd, should determine when it ought to be given over. Which, indeed, had been plausible enough, had not the progress that was made in the Controversie been in very little, and had it not been evident to you, that the Point naturally led to several Difficulties, which tho' it were not necessary for Mr. T- Satisfaction (who, I suppose, brought it with him to the Conference), yet it would have become so great a Man as Cambray,

verifie you (I do not say, *Would be*, but) are so far from, to remove. For, whereas Mr. G—'s Third Question was, *By what certain Rule you know that the New Testament, we now have, contain'd all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles?* And you Answer'd, That it was by the *Universal Testimony of the Christian Church.* To say nothing of the difference in Translations, as well as in the Number of the Books, it is to be explain'd how you understand, that *all the Divine Revelations are contain'd in the New Testament*, viz. Whether you mean that all necessary Articles of Faith are contain'd in the New Testament *virtually* and *implicitly*, and so as that all, or at least, some of them stand in need of the Churches Interpretation and Authority for being made known to us, which Meaning will do you little Service; or else, that all such Articles are contain'd in it *clearly* and *explicitly*, and so as that they are evident to every sober Enquirer, which is the Doctrine you commonly Teach. Now it is most apparent, that you are not al-fer'd by the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church, that *all the Divine Revelations of Christ and his Apostles are contain'd after this last manner in the New Testament*, since all those Churches in Communion with Rome, and divers others, positively affirm the contrary; So that if the Absolute Certainty of the Elements of your Faith have no other Ground, than a pretended Universal Testimony of the Christian Church, that all necessary Articles are *plainly* and *explicitly* contain'd in the New Testament; and that in reality there be no such Universal Testimony (as it is undeniably there is none) it necessarily follows, that your *Absolute Certainty* is wholly groundless.

You

You see, Sir, how main a Point ought to have been spoken to, before you and Mr. G.— had taken your leaves of this Subject. M. 1. 1. 5. 1. 18. 19. 11.

But Mr. G.— waving this necessary Branch of the Controversie for that present, was willing to understand first, what you meant by your *Universal Testimony*, and how far it extended. He therefore preserv'd you to know, what you meant by the *Christian Church*, on whose Testimony you rely'd. Here Mr. F. once more profess'd his Satisfaction, and you again thought he had so much caule for it, that you were very loath the Disputation should proceed any further. But being told, That seeing we were to receive the Rule of our Faith from the Testimony of the *Christian Church*, it was but reasonable that we should know what that *Christian Church* was, to which we ought to have recourse, especially since there were so many different Opinions concerning it; you were at length content that Mr. G.— should set down his Fifth Question, which was thus—

Being the Words Christian Church may be taken in divers Latitudes by Persons of different Religions, I desire to know, what that Christian Church is, whose Testimony concerning the Book of Scripture, and the Doctrine contain'd therein, is a sufficient Ground to make us certain of all Matters, that are necessary to our Salvation. I put it in the Words of your own Copy. Here we expected (as, I suppose, all my Readers would have done) that you would have given us a Definition, or Description of the *Christian Church*. But instead of this you tell us, That by the *Universal Testimony of the Christian Church*, &c. you mean the *Census of all Christian Churches from the Apostles Times down to this*. Was not this Trifling? Who

Who doubts, but that the *Christian Church* in general, must consist of all Christian Churches in particular? Mr. G--'s Intention was (as you might easily see), to know what Churches in this Proposition, you accounted *Christian Churches* (i.e. Parts of the Universal Christian Church): Whether you took in all those Congregations, who made any Profession of Believing in Christ, or requir'd something more (and what it was you requir'd) for the Qualifying them for particular Christian Churches, or Parts of the Universal Christian Church. And therefore expressly he asked you, Whether you includ'd the *Arians*, *Nestorians*, *Eutychians*, and *Catharists*, and urg'd that this Question might likewise be written down. You reply'd, That it should not be written, unless it were by consent: And you did not consent, because Mr. T-- declar'd (now more loudly than before) that he was fully satisfied, and desir'd to propose a new Question to Mr. G--.

Thus Mr. G-- was forc'd to break off, and thus ended that Point, which was design'd for the whole Subject of the Conference; but whether with much Glory to you, or much Shame to Mr. G--. I leave the most partial of my Readers to judge. Certainly, when you had given leave for Mr. G--'s Fifth Question, you ought to have permitted his Sixth; since it stood only to obtain that Answer, which you could not but perceive I was aim'd at by his Fifth, viz. *What Churches you look'd upon as Members of the Christian Church* etc. to be determined by the Delegates of the Conference.

I have here laid before you, the most material Passages and Circumstances of this First Disputation, as sincerely (I call God to Witness) as I have been able, and as succinctly (according to my Juris-

Judgment ; as the Nature of the Thing would bear, and could agree with that fulness in the Account, which I promised at first. I have, indeed, been somewhat the more Particular in it, in regard that you say little, or nothing thereof, whereas one would have expected, that whilst you pretend to give a *True Account* of this Conference, you would not have pass'd by in silence so considerable a Part of it, not to say, in a manner the Whole. I am sure, that if you have any reason to complain, that Mr. G---'s Copies were imperfect, he hath much more to say, that your *True Account* is so : For if in his Paper there be a Twig missing in one of the Branches, the very Trunk or Body of the Tree is wanting in your Account ; So easie it is to imagine Faults in others, and so hard to see them in our selves ! And so true, that the Mote is more discernible to us in our Brothers Eyes, than the B E A M in our own.

Having finisht what I had to say concerning this First and Chief Controversie, I shall use the same Sincerity in giving you both Copies of the Second ; in which, as it happen'd when the Spirits of the Disputants grew warmer, so (especially towards the Conclusion, as I have said above) the Noise and Wrangling might hinder the Writers from being so exact. However even here, the Difference is so inconsiderable, that an ordinary Charity would rather lay the blame of it on a casual Error, than any wilful Mistake.

Mr. G----s Copy. Dr. St---s Copy.

1. Qu. How do you prove the Church of Rome to be Infallible?

1. Ans. By the Church of Rome I mean all the Churches in Communion with Rome; and this Church I hold to be Infallible, by following the Universal Testimony of all Traditional Christians (that is to say) by holding the same Doctrine to Day that was delivered Yesterday, in Faith, and so up to the Time of our Blessed Saviour: For if they follow this Rule they can never Err in Faith, and therefore are Infallible.

2. Qu. How do's it appear that the Church of Rome is Infallible in Tradition?

2. Ans. All Tradition.

1 Qu. How do you prove the Church of Rome to be Infallible?

1 Ans. By the Church of Rome, I mean all the Churches in Communion with Rome; and this Church I hold to be Infallible, by following, the Universal Testimony of all Traditional Christians, that is to say, by holding the same Doctrine to day that was delivered yesterday (in Faith) and so up to the time of our blessed Saviour, for if they follow this Rule, they can never Err in Faith, and therefore are Infallible.

2 Qu. How do's it appear that the Church of Rome is Infallible in the sense and meaning of Tradition, and is this Tradition a Rule of Faith distinct from Scripture or no?

2 Ans. All Traditional

many Christians, that is, all Bishops, all Priests, all Fathers, and all People following this Rule, and receiving Faith, because it was received the Day before, could not Innovate in Faith, unless they could all, either forget what they received the day before, or out of Malice change it; therefore because no cause can be assigned for such an effect, they cannot Innovate: If there can? Assign it.

3 Qu. Whether the Greek Church did follow from Father to Son the Tradition in matters of Faith, or no?

3 Answ. Till they left that Rule and took up another, and so fell into Error as the Calvinists did.

many Christians, that is, all Bishops, all Priests, all Fathers, and all People following this Rule, and receiving Faith, because it was received the day before, could not innovate in Faith, unless they could all either forget what they received the day before, or out of Malice change it; therefore because no cause can be assigned for such an effect, they cannot innovate: If they can? Assign it.

3 Qu. Did not the Greek Church follow Tradition from Father to Son, and yet err in matters of Faith, so that a Church pretending to follow Tradition may err in matters of Faith?

3 Answ. The Greek Church followed Tradition till the *Arians* left that Rule, and took up a new one, that is, Scripture privately interpreted.

Dr. St.— I speak not of the *Arians* but of the present Greek Church.

The chief defect, which you here seem to complain of in Mr. G--- Paper, is in the Third Question, viz. That it being set down, *Whether the Greek Church did follow Tradition from Father to Son, or no?* The inference which you drew from it, is left out. Now it is so palpably evident to any one, who reads the preceding Questions and Answers, for what reason you asked that Question, and consequently, *what inference you drew from it*, that it cannot be imagined, Mr. G's Amanuensis should have any design in leaving out those words, unless it were to spare unnecessary pains; it being manifest, that you produced the example of the Greek Church, to disprove what had been said before, touching the Infallibility of Tradition: So that, in my Opinion, this ought not to have been the occasion of any misunderstanding between you.

But whereas you say, that Mr. G--- grants you in his Answer, that *the Greek Church followed Tradition*: If you mean, that *they followed it, even when they fell into error*. I find no such thing in his Answer, neither according to his Copy nor yours. But if you mean, That *the Greek Church followed Tradition, till they erred*. This is no plainer in your Copy, than it is in his.

To your Instance of the Greek Church, I remember Mr. G--- answered, That *they adhered to Tradition till the time of the Arians*, but whether or no, he dictated his Answer in those terms, when it came to be written down, I have forgotten. Neither do I remember, that your last saying, (viz.) *I mean not the Arians, &c.* which is left out in Mr. G's Copy, was written down. I believe, that neither Mr. T--- nor the Gentleman, who wrote for Mr. G--- had it in

in their Copies : Neither do I think that your own Amanuensis wrote it whilst Mr. G— stayed. At least, I am confident that it was not *set down by Consent*, and therefore not according to that Law, which you had observed in the former Disputation : However I must ingenuously confess (as I have done already) that this Point was not fully cleared : For (before your Reply, *viz.* that you meant not the *Amen, &c.*) was written down, which, according to the Method of this Conference, had been Mr. G's time of Answering) some mutual Reproaches (which were begun by your self) arising between you and your Adversary. Mr. T— rose up (as I have said) and desired, there might be no farther words in this matter, forasmuch as he was fully satisfied, saying (as he himself hath since reminded me) that *seeing the Greek Church, which (as it seems he fancied) was Universal, had err'd, it was evident to him, that an Universal Church might err*, with somewhat more to the like purpose, and of the like strain. I say, these heats of our Disputants, and this importunity of Mr. T— were the true Causes of our parting in so great a hurry, insomuch that all those things which were spoken were not written, nor some (perhaps) of what was written so nicely exact, as not to leave room for the cavils of one, who might be more concerned for the peculiar credit of Learning in himself, than for the ordinary reputation of Integrity in his Adversary.

You say, That Mr. G— rose up, and endeavoured to bind the Writers from setting down this latter part, as is ought to have been : And herein you seem to own what I have said, *viz.* That in the latter part of this Dispute things were not set down so exactly as they ought to have been. And, consequently, what you say

Say of an Original Paper read aloud and approved by both Parties, must not be understood of a Paper containing the whole Conference ; for, how came it to pass, that in a Paper approved by both Parties, all things were not set down, as they ought to have been ? But whereas you say that Mr. G— endeavoured to hinder the setting down of these things, I dare say, that if you examin your Conscience once more, you will find no such thought in it : For my own part, I am confident, that if you had desired Mr. G— (which you did not) to have stayed, for the writing and comparing these last words, he would most readily have complied with you, which is more than you would do with him (as I have shewed) in your former Disputation, in which you were as much beholding to Mr. T— for his desire of breaking off the Discourse, as you can fancy that Mr. G— was obliged to him for a like importunity in this. Mr. T's importunity was the same in both occasions, but in the former Mr. G— desired that his Question might be written down, and was not heard, whereas in the latter you asked no such thing.

But, besides what I have already said, it might have been expected, that you, who have been so much versed in these Polemic Discourses, and are so well skill'd in all the Laws relating to them, when you saw two several Copies of this Conference carried out of your House, would have taken care that they might have been compared, or, at least, proposed it, especially when (as you say) Mr. G— had taken care in the Conference to keep you from expecting any great ingenuity from him after it. If you will take my judgment on the Case (which, I think, is not very rash) you hoped for greater advantage

vantage from this Omission (which was as much your fault, as Mr. G's) by having some appearance of an Objection, than you could have received from the Conference, had it been published to the World, even in your own Copy.

You say, you know, what Arts have been used to get Mr. T— to approve Mr. G—'s Copy. And I believe, that neither Mr. G—, nor any of his Friends, nor even Mr. T— himself knows any such. At least, Mr. T— told me not long since, that he himself was dissatisfied with this expression of yours. But lest the World should think that your Insinuation is wholly without pretence (and that, at the same time, it may know, how great an Improver one may be) I will acknowledge, that once meeting accidentally with Mr. T— in the Street, I told him, I heard, you complained that Mr. G—'s Papers of the Conference were false, and therefore I desired him to compare his Copy with that which was written for Mr. G—. That we might see, whether Mr. G— or his Ammanensis had dealt fairly, or not. Which was all I said, and (as I understand by Mr. T—) all the ground you have for this Aspersion. What could be more natural, innocent or just than this proceeding? But Dr. S— knows what Arts were used. Would to God, that neither he nor I had any worse. But I believe, that this very Insinuation will appear at the last Day to be a worse Art, than any were used on this occasion with Mr. T—. If Mr. T— had informed you of any Bribes, Promises, Threats or any kind of Perswasions, that had been made use of, for the corrupting him to the Approbation of our Copy, you would have done well to have laid them open; but if a bare desire that Mr. T— would compare his Copy with ours,

must;

must pass for a design of corrupting him; I think; it would be convenient, that for the future we pull not off our Hats to this Mr. T-- when we meet him, lest it should be interpreted, that we still court him to our Party. But, I presume, I need not take much pains, to wipe off this Aspersion, since I cannot but perswade my self, that my Readers, when they have perused the abovewritten Copies, will conclude with me that Mr. G-- had no great occasion for these Arts, and that the offering a Temptation of that nature to so zealous a Protestant as Mr. T--, must do his cause more harm, than he could receive benefit by his yielding to it.

To conclude: I pray, Sir, what worse Art was it, for us to desire Mr. T-- to compare his Copy with ours, than it was for you, to desire the Gentleman who wrote for Mr. G. to compare his with yours? But Eating, Drinking, Sleeping are natural Actions in Dr. St-- and at the same time, Arts and Conspiracies in Mr. G--.

You say, that when you had desired Mr. T-- to bring that Gentleman to you, word was left with your Servant, that *he was not well*. I know not what Mystery you likewise make of this. But I assure you, That, when this hapned, the Gentleman you mention, told me, *you had sent for him, but that he had entred on a Course of Physick, and could not conveniently wait on you till that were over.*

You say further, that *supposing he (Mr. G-- or his Amanuensis) should correct his Copy, this will be too late for your Vindication*, since so many imperfect ones have been given out and dispersed, &c. and therefore you are forced to take this way (i. e. publish this Letter) to put a stop to such disingenuous proceeding. This, I must confess,

self, is what I cannot comprehend. You complain, that you have suffered by false Copies : And will it not be a sufficient reparation, to have these false Copies recalled, or disown'd, and true ones published in their stead ? And here let me tell you, that it is not a little wondred at, why you your self had not published a True Copy of this Conference, (especially since you tell us of an Original approved by both Parties) which would have been a more natural and proper way of putting a stop to the *disingenuous proceeding*, you speak of, than that which you have taken. Certainly, there can be no cause assigned for this Omission, unles it be, that, in truth, you are as little pleased with the true Copies, as the false ones, which may serve for a new Argument, that the difference between them is not very great, and also for another Inference, which the Reader will make.

Besides, had you, assoon as these imperfect Copies came to your hands, sent to Mr. G--- to know whether or no they were given out by him, and in case they were, had you shewn him the Errors of them, and desired their amendment, none could have blamed you. But so long after, to take the opportunity of his absence, and, to accuse him in this public manner without first hearing what he had to say, either, in the full defence of himself, or, at least, in the extenuation of his faults, was in my Opinion neither an *ingenuous* nor Christian proceeding.

You tell us after this, *you bear that I* (for so, I am told, you understand by Mr. M-) *pretend you gave out false Copies.* But what I pretended, was (according to what you will have read before) that I had seen a Copy which was said to be taken from yours, that in the principal Controversie it differed nothing

from Mr. G's, and that in the other, the difference was not so considerable, but it might well arise from the confusion or abruptness wherein the Disputation ended; that forasmuch as concerned your last Clause, *viz. I mean not the Arians, &c.* I verily believed that it was not written down whilst we stayed, at least, not so as to be taken notice of by both Parties, or by consent, which you looked on as a necessary circumstance for the setting down of former Points. Now if any one interpreted this, *a Pretending that you gave me a false Copy,* it is more than I could prevent: For my own part, I never termed it so, being loth to lay the severest Censure on things for which there may be some color; and therefore tho' I was perswaded that this *Disputed Clause* was not set down according to our Rule, *viz. by Consent,* I could never prevail with my self to accuse your Copy of downright falsehood, because I remembred that you said those words, and that Mr. G— (as far as I can call to mind) return'd no express Answer, being diverted from it, as I have already shewn. However had Mr. G— taken the same liberty, and after his departure written down, that Question which he asked you at the end of the first Disputation, I am afraid you would not have been so civil or scrupulous, as not to have called his Copy false. For how could this be expected, when you now take a far less occasion (if it may be stiled an occasion) for so great a Defamation?

You tell Mr. G—, that because his Writer's Copy was not read, and none signed, you desire him to make good two things, which, you say, the whole Conference depended on. Now, I should have thought, that because Mr. G's Copy was not read, and none signed, you would have desired, that both Copies might have been read, agreed;

greed on, and Sign'd, and so Dispersed, that what-ever Damage accrû'd to either Side from the Imperfection of former Copies, might be repair'd and prevented by these perfect ones, for the future. But instead of this to tell us, that because the Papers were not Read and Signed, you expect that a new Dispute should be commenc'd, what is it but to confirm what I have already intimated, viz. that you are not much in love with either Copy, and the Conference it self is as little to your Satisfaction, as the worst Account of it ?

I know not what Mr. G— will return to your Challenge, but I must confess, I do not see with what reason you can term it *a just and necessary Vindication of your self.* For, if you are desirous that the World should have a true Account of what pass'd in the Conference, the abovemention'd Papers compar'd and adjust'd, will effect this much better than a new Dispute : For, tho' you should overcome in it, will it therefore follow that you had the better in the Conference ? And again, tho' Mr. G— should carry away the Palm in this Second Engagement, will it thence appear how Innocent or Guilty he was in the publication of his Paper ? You see, Sir, how improper and ineffectual a Way you propose either for your Justification, or Mr. G's : and how convenient it is for both, that the Writings of the Conference should be adjust'd and publish'd (if you are not contented with those which you find here) since it is not Skill, or the Merits of the First Cause, but the Sincerity of the Persons which is now in Question.

But if you judge, that the Disputations of the Conference are lame and imperfect, I am of your Mind. And therefore, if you think fit to propose,

that, in order to the drawing things to a Conclusion; both Parties may be oblig'd to go on where they left off: I dare promise you, that Mr. G.— will give you a fair Meeting at any such reasonable Time or Place, as you shall appoint. And lest you should be apprehensive of suffering any more by false Copies, I question not but you will have his Consent, to have them taken by sworn Notaries, or even by your own *Amanuensis*, and (for greater Security) in the presence of as many and as credible Witnesses as you please. And here you have as *fair an Opportunity of shewing your self* as you offer Mr. G.—; Only, I suppose, he will ask one Favor of you, which is, That such an Umpire may be chosen, as will give a free scope to the Discourse, and not cut it off, before any thing be concluded, as Mr. T. dealt by this.

I say not these things out of any apprehension I have, that Mr. G.— would find much difficulty in undertaking that Province which you are pleas'd to put upon him, so far, at least, as it concerns his former Arguments; but because I judge this a most impertinent Method in our present Difference, as, I doubt not, but it will appear to any one, whose Partiality has not robb'd him of his common Sense.

But, besides what I have alledged above in this Matter, it is my Opinion, that Truth is not so easily discover'd to such as are mistaken, by large Books of Controversie, as by these Conferences, especially when they are faithfully Penn'd down, and so expos'd to the general View. And this for the following Reasons.

1. Few Men have Leisure, or (at least) Industry enough for the perusal of large Treatises; whereas one of these Conferences seldom reaches to above a Sheet of Paper.

2. Men

2. Men are commonly so well perswaded of the Truth of their own Party, or else so willing to be perswaded of it, that for the most part they only Read their own Authors, and so become, at best, but partial Judges, especially when they happen to be on that Side which stands in need of some insincere Dealing for its support. Whereas in these Conferences, the Arguments on both Sides being inter-changeably set down, and mixt with one another, it will not be possible for the Reader to read and understand the one, without reading, and considering the other.

3. The strength of the Arguments is more perspicuous, when they are thus plac'd by one another, according to the Maxim, *Contraria iuxta se posita magis elucentur*: As it is also, when they are laid before us naked, and stript of all those artificial Ornaments of Rhetorick and Satyr, which make up a great part of our late Controversial Volumes, and serve for nothing else, than to amuse and deceive an unwary and unskilful Reader, who is inclin'd to think, that he, who says most, hath most to say, and that he, who hath the best Jest, hath likewise the best Argument.

4. In these Conferences the Disputants liave not so great an opportunity of wresting and perverting one anothers Arguments, as they have, when each Party sitting in his Study, and (as it were) on his own Dunghill, hath his Adversary at his Mercy, and makes him speak what he hath a mind to, by disfiguring and misrepresenting his Arguments, or else changeth the State of the Question, and imposeth a new Task upon him, dealing with him as Conjurers are said to do with the Devil, who, when they have rais'd

wis'd him, are taught never to let him rest, but as soon as one Business is dispatch'd, or even before 'tis quire done, to employ him in another, lest otherwise he might want Work, and then destroy the Conjurers to keep himself from Idleness.

And we have not far to go for some Instance of this nature : For you are pleas'd to say, that the Conference whereof we now speak, depended on two things to be prov'd by Mr. G — (1.) That you [Protestants] have no *absolute Certainty*, as to the Rule of your Faith, viz. *The Scripture*, altho' you have a larger and firmer *Tradition* for it, viz. *The Consent of all Christian Churches*, than we [Catholics] can have for the Points of Faith in difference between us. (2.) That the Tradition from Father to Son is an infallible Conveyance of Matters of Faith, notwithstanding the *Greek Church* is charg'd by us [Catholics] with Error, which had her'd to Tradition.

Now, as to the First, it is not deny'd, That there is, in truth, an *absolute Certainty* for that Scripture wherein you agree with us ; but that according to your Principles (who at the time of your Reformation charg'd all Christian Churches with Errors, not only in other Articles of their Belief, but even in the Tradition or Delivery of Scripture, and yet rely on the Tradition of these Churches for it) any such Certainty can be shewn.

We say farther, that, whereas you pretend to an absolute Certainty as to the Rule of your Faith from the Consent of all Christian Churches ; you seem to forget, that your Rule is *Scripture*, not as Interpreted (or to be Interpreted) by the Church, but as understood (or to be understood without a necessity of submitting to the Interpretation of the Church) by every

every sober Enquirer, tho' of the meanest capacity, for which Rule (as you know well enough) you are very far from having the Consent of all Christian Churches. To which purpose I spoke before.

Lastly, we desire to know (according to what I have likewise said above) what those *Christian Churches* are, whose Testimony is required towards the assuring us, what is Scripture and what not, and by what mark you distinguish them from others: Since we cannot suppose, that in this Case you require the Concurrence of all Heretical Congregations, which may profess a Belief in Christ, and call themselves Christians, soasmuch as these amongst them (some denying one Book of Scripture and some another) either have, or may deny the whole Canon: And for this reason, you ought to shew us by what Rule we are able to discern the Orthodox Deliverers of Scripture from the Heterodox, lest otherwise we may be deceived by receiving too little or too much for Canonical: And this was that Task, which remained on your hands, when the first Disputation broke off. But here instead of finishing it, you finely disguise it, and by a certain Controversy-juggle put it into the hands of your Adversary, as tho' it belonged to him.

In the second Point, you would make the World believe, that it lay on Mr. G— to prove, that supposing *The Greek Church erred, whilst it adhered to Tradition*, a Church adhering to Tradition could not err: Whereas Mr. G— never acknowledged, that *The Greek Church erred, whilst it adhered to Tradition*; and therefore to suppose it, as you do, was to beg the Question, and misrepresent the State of the Argument.

Wherefore:-

Wherefore, to stay no longer on this Subject, I beg of my Readers to weigh your two Propositions, and compare them carefully with the two Disputations, to which they belong; and if after that, they shall conclude, that each Question is rightly Stated by you, and that the Proof in both is incumbent on Mr. G—, as you would have it, I will be contented that my Fourth Reason against Disputing by Books, (*viz.* the hazard of Misrepresentation) shall go for nothing.

Fifthly, Much time is spent by Controversie-Writers, not only in proving certain Propositions which would be granted them by their Adversaries, but also in raising silly Objections, which their Adversaries neither have, nor are like to make. Which two things (besides the loss of Time, which is no small mischief) are very apt to misguide one, who is not resolved to hear both sides, by making him think, that what his Author is so solicitous to prove, must necessarily be denied by the adverse Party, and that what the one labors to refute, the other must have Objected, or, at least, be likely to Object. And what an erroneous Idea must such a person have of his Authors Adversaries, whilst he takes those weak Affirmations and Denials to be Theirs, which are not so in effect?

Now, these Inconveniences are avoided by a Personal Conference, where nothing is proved but what is denied, and nothing refuted but what is really Objected. Hereby the loss of time is prevented, the just reputation of the Disputants and the due merits of each Cause preserved, and (what is most considerable) a great hindrance to the discovery of Truth removed.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, The multiplication of large Volumes of Controversie is apt to breed a conceit in very many, that an Enquiry after Truth is both difficult and fruitless: And therefore they often chuse, rather to despair with ease, than to labour (as they fancy) without any hope of Success. Whereas these shorter Conferences will either satisfy them sooner, or, at least, more easily engage them in so necessary a Search.

There are several other Reasons which might be alledged to the same purpose, but I think, these are sufficient to convince the World, that if Mr. G— should prefer a personal Conference to the Writing of Books (as, I hope, he will) it would not be any Tergiversation, but the choice of the best and most useful way of deciding Controversies, and particularly this. And since you are now become the Challenger, he ought (according to the Laws of Duel) to chuse his Weapon, or manner of Fight.

Hitherto I have found fault with you, and now perhaps, it will not be amiss, if I acknowledge an Error or Weakness of my own, which is, that at first I imagined my self to have found a great advantage against you, by a Reflection, which I (and several others) made on the perusal of your two Propositions, *viz.* That in your first you seem to affirm, that the Tradition of all Christian Churches, which (speaking in general) you call in your Disputation the Christian Church, is a ground of *Absolute Certainty* for the admittance of Scripture: And in your Second you would infer, That Tradition is no *infallible Conveyance* of Matters of Faith. Now supposing it a Matter of Faith, that all the Books of Scripture owned by you, were inspired by the Holy Ghost, (that is,

are true Scripture) as, I presume, you will not deny, I do not see, but your Propositions contradict one another, and we have once more Dr. G. against Dr. St. viz. Tradition the ground of *Absolute Certainty* on the one hand, and *no infallible Conveyance* on the other. I must confess (I say) that I looked on this Implication, as manifest to that degree, that it would not be easie for you to get clear of it; but when I considered, how great a Talent you have, of reconciling (what we ordinary Folks account) Contradictions, and how evident you have already made it, That a Church may be *true*, and yet *Idolatrous*, and that Roman Catholics may be *saved*, and yet by being Roman Catholics must be guilty of *Sins inconsistent with Salvation*, I thought it more advisable to let this new seeming Contradiction pass Muster, than to offer an occasion for more Volumes of that kind. However you must give me leave to tell you, that when you have sufficiently proved the first of these Propositions, which (if any Body's) is truly your Task, viz. *That Tradition is a ground of absolute Certainty for the receiving of the Scripture*: It is ten to one, but you furnish Mr. G. with Arguments to prove the Second, which is his Province, viz. *That Tradition is an Infallible Conveyance of Masters of Faith.*

I hope, my Readers will not imagin by what they find here, that I have any purpose of being engaged in these Disputations. It would be too great an Arrogance for me to pretend, either to succeed Mr. G., or to oppose Dr. St. And therefore I have meddled with the Controversie no farther, than I thought it necessary to the clearing of Matter of Fact, by shewing (as well as I could) how the Disputations

putations were carried on, how they ended, what still remained to be proved by both Sides, and to what manner of Proving (*viz.* Whether by Personal Conference, or otherwise) they seemed to be obliged. In a word, my Design hath been nothing else, than (as far as I have been able) to rescue Mr. G. - from those Imputations which your Accusation and Challenge would bring upon him, till such time as he himself may have an opportunity of doing it more fully by his own Pen. But I suppose, enough is shewed already, to convince the World, that if in the Conference the Victory lay on your side, you were not much mistaken, when you thought it *not worth having off.*

You seem (to many of your Readers) to lay some stress on Mr. G's going to Coffee-Houses, and your *not* going to them, as if therefore the more Credit were to be given to you, and the less to him. But, I do not think, that you could have any such meaning, when I find, you had your main Intelligence concerning Mr. G's behaviour, from those Houses, and consequently by such persons as made no scruple of visiting them, whom, I presume, you would not believe so easily and thoroughly as you do, did you esteem them the less credible for those visits. I know, many Lies are told in Coffee-houses; but if all places were to be avoided, wherein Lies are told, I am afraid, that Dr. St. would run the hazard of being silenced for want of a Pulpit, which might be ventur'd on.

Certainly, it is no Crime to go to Coffee-houses: tho', I confess, to talk in them as many do, is a very great one. But instead of this, if any one should (as far as Prudence and Opportunity will give way)

divert those Discourses from what is Seditious, Idle or Profane, to that which is serious, and useful; either for this life or the next, he would be so far from committing a fault, that he would prevent many; and, perhaps, by leaving some good impression or other in those he converses with, do a greater Service to the Common-wealth, and to Almighty God; than if he had kept at home. But this is a kind of Missionary Zeal, and therefore what the Children of the Reformation are little acquainted with.

However, forasmuch as concerns the Coffee-Houses, we have far more in them of Dr. St's Coat, than of Mr. G's. But whether with any better motive than that of entertaining and recreating themselves, I will not determine. And therefore if it pass for looseness, or want of due Gravity, to visit a Coffee-house, I desire Dr. St. to tell me, what Spirit leads so many of his own Brethren thither. But some people, so they may strike those, whom they take for their Enemies, care not, if at the same time, they fall foul on their Friends; oil, to civile & O

But for such as cry so often, *What have we to do with Religion in a Coffee-house?* I would fain know of them, whether or no, it be lawful to visit any Place, or Conversation, where it will be improper to Honor God, or Edifie our Neighbor? For my part, I think, it is not. And therefore if a Coffee-house be a place, wherein Religion is not to be meddled with, I shall be of Dr. St's mind (if his mind be such) and conclude, That it ought not to be visited.

But because I remember, that during the Conference you complain'd of want of Time (which, as I should have told you, was also a principal occasion of Mr. T's haft) it will not be fit that I should.

should detain you much longer; And therefore to the main Opinion which you seem to express of your Adversary, I shall only say, that, methinks, you ought not to make us think so poorly of our selves, whilst you endeavour to perwade us that we have no need of any Guide in the most Mysterious Things, since nothing can be a greater Argument for the necessity of Direction, than the sight of our own Weakness. Wherefore, if you please, let us compound the Busines. We will be contented to pass for Weak and Ignorant, and you shall be obliged to shew, by whom we may be protected from Error; It being most uncomfortable to be shewn, that we ought not so trust our Reason, and to be told that we ought. And I question not but you will effectually perform this whenever you comply with what appears to be your Task already, and give us some distinguishing Marks, for the finding out those Christians, on whose Tradition we may safely rely, for the reception of the Holy Scriptures; since if we may venture on *St. Augustins Judgment) it would be a Madnes to disbelieve those in any other Matter of Faith, whom we believe in so important a Point. Tell us then, from whom we are to receive the Scriptures, and we will not ask you, to whom we ought to go for Certainty in other Doctrins.

S. Aug. libro contra Epist. Fundamenti. Ego vero Evangelio non credarem, nisi me Catholice Ecclesie commoveret Authoritas. Quibus Engobtemperavi dicentibus, Credite Evangelio, cur eis non obtemperem dicentibus mihi, Noli credere Manichao, &c.

I have but one thing more to acquaint you with, which is, that tho' I have shewn that the Answering your Challenge hath nothing to do with our present Dispute, and that even for the finishing of the first Controversies, I like Conferring, better than Writing; yet there are some amongst us who think, that you ought not to want your satisfaction, even in that way, which you will suppose the *least liable to the injury of false Copies.* And consequently your Objection concerning the Greek Church is undertaken, which being the Argument you seem fondeſt of, and that which you have pickt out of the whole Conference to flouriſh with in your Letter, I promise my ſelf that my News will be very grateful to you, and here in the Cloſe make ſome kind of amends, for any Term or Expression, which (through my attending oftentimes more to the nature of the Things treated of, than to the Dignity of the Person with whom I treat) may have ſlipp from my Pen, leſs agreeing with that Respect, wherewith I desire to continue,

London, March 28.

1687.

SIR,

Your most humble Servant

E. M.

